

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /063 W

----- 087603

O R 020900Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7927

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 10

EDELIVER TO NEA/ARN DRAPER AT OPENING OF BUSINESS.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: 0900 LEBANON REPORT

1. NEW YEARS EVE AND DAY PASSED RELATIVELY QUIETLY BUT IT'S STILL A WAR TORN CITY. CONTRARY TO TRADITION, THERE WAS NO REPEAT NO MOVEMENT ON STREETS NEW YEARS EVE BUT AT MIDNIGHT BOTH FACTIONS PUT ON THE MOST AMAZING PYROTECHNIC SHOW I HAVE EVER SEEN. SOME MACHINE GUN BELTS WERE OBVIOUSLY MADE UP EXCLUSIVELY OF TRACERS AND RED FIREBALLS ILLUMINTATED PARTS OF THE SKY. HEAVY WEAPONS ALSO HAD TRACERS AND WE WERE CERTAIN THAT EVERY PISTOL IN TOWN WAS FIRED AT LEAST ONCE. MOST OF FIRE, WE NOTED, WAS IN THE AIR BUT A FEW OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT CONTROL THEMSELVES AND WERE FIRING FLAT TRAJECTORY INTO ASHRAFIYEH.

2. NO NEWSPAPERS TO SPEAK OF TODAY. YESTERDAY'S PRESS HOWEVER, MADE MENTION OF CERTAIN AREAS DOWNTOWN BEIRUT WHERE VEHICLES NOT REPEAT NOT PERMITTED AND WITHDRAWAL OF ARMED ELEMENTS. LATTER PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE IN THAT ENROUTE TO OFFICE THIS MORNING I DID NOT SEE A SINGLE ARMED MAN AND EVEN THE RELATIVELY HEAVY AND IMPORTANT PHALANGE CHECKPOINT AS ONE ENTERS THE PORT

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AREA WAS NOT REPEAT NOT MANNED.

3. POLITICKING CONTINUES BUT NO ONE SEEMS OPTIMISTIC.
IF ANYTHING, WE NOTE A HARDENING OF THE CHRISTIAN LINE
AND IF ONE WERE TO JUDGE BY PUBLIC UTTERANCES, THE
CHRISTIANS NOW HAVE RETREATED FROM A 50/50 POSITION
RE PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION.

4. INDEPENDENT DAILIES AN-NAHAR AND L'ORIENT LE JOUR
SUBJECT LAST EVENING TO A ATTACK BY ARMED INDIVIDUALS
WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PLANT EXPLOSIVES. ATTACK
THWARTED BY GUARDS. RAYMOND EDDE RETURNED YESTERDAY AND
CONTINUES MOST UNHELPFUL COMTMENTS WHICH ARE LOYALLY
HEADLINED BY AN#NAHAR AND L'ORIENT LE JOUR.

5. DISTRIBUTION FLOUR AND POL PRODUCTS CONTINUED
SPORADICALLY BUT RELATIVELY EFFECTIVELY OVER LAST 48 HOURS.
BANKS SUPPOSEDLY DECIDING TODAY OR TOMORROW WHETHER
THEY WILL OPEN NEXT WEEK. AUB'S DECISION TO OPEN
JAN 5 CONTINUES TO RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE MEDIA
ATTENTION.
GODLY

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